

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Section 4.0, Environmental Analysis examines the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project and Project Alternatives. This section includes analyses of the environmental issue areas listed below:

- 4.1 Aesthetics/Visual Resources
- 4.2 Air Quality
- 4.3 Biological Resources
- 4.4 Commercial and Recreational Fishing Resources
- 4.5 Cultural Resources
- 4.6 Geology, Soils, Faults, and Mineral Resources
- 4.7 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 4.8 Land Use and Recreation
- 4.9 Marine Transportation
- 4.10 Noise
- 4.11 System Safety/Risk of Upset
- 4.12 Transportation/Circulation

Each environmental issue area analyzed in this document provides background information and describes the environmental setting (baseline conditions) to help the reader understand the conditions that would cause an impact to occur. In addition, each section describes how an impact is determined to be “significant” or “less than significant.” Finally, the individual sections recommend mitigation measures (MMs) to reduce significant impacts. Throughout Section 4.0, Environmental Analysis, both impacts and the corresponding MMs are identified by a bold **letter-number designation** (e.g., Impact **BIO-1** and **MM BIO-1a**).

Based on an initial review and analysis, it is likely that the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact, or no impact, on the environmental issue areas identified below. The primary reasons for these determinations are as follows:

- **Agricultural Resources.** Project construction activities will be short-term and will utilize an established cable corridor that contains no agricultural resources. Areas that will be minimally impacted, including established access routes, are likewise not used for agricultural activities.

- 1 • **Hazards/Hazardous Materials.** Project construction activities do not involve the
2 use of hazardous materials and no known hazards that could potentially impact
3 the project are found in the construction corridor.
- 4 • **Public Services.** The proposed Project would not result in a significant long-
5 term demand for police, fire or other public services due to the short-term
6 duration of construction activities.
- 7 • **Utilities and Service Systems.** The proposed Project would not result in
8 additional demand for water, wastewater treatment, or significant demand for
9 solid waste disposal services.

10 **ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

11 **Environmental Baseline**

12 The analysis of each issue area begins with an examination of the existing physical
13 setting (baseline conditions as determined pursuant to section 15125(a) of the California
14 Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] Guidelines) that may be affected by the proposed
15 Project. The effects of the proposed Project are defined as changes to the
16 environmental setting that are attributable to Project components or operation.

17 **Significance Criteria**

18 Significance criteria are identified for each environmental issue area. The significance
19 criteria serve as benchmarks for determining if a component action will result in a
20 significant adverse environmental impact when evaluated against the baseline.
21 According to the CEQA Guidelines section 15382, a significant effect on the
22 environment means "...a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any
23 of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project..."

Impact Analysis

Impacts are classified as:

- **Class I** (significant adverse impact that remains significant after mitigation);
- **Class II** (significant adverse impact that can be eliminated or reduced below an issue's significance criteria);
- **Class III** (adverse impact that does not meet or exceed an issue's significance criteria); or
- **Class IV** (beneficial impact).

A determination will be made, based on the analysis of any impact within each affected environmental issue area and compliance with any recommended mitigation measure(s), of the level of impact remaining in comparison to the pertinent significance criteria. If the impact remains significant, at or above the significance criteria, it is deemed to be Class I. If a "significant adverse impact" is reduced, based on compliance with mitigation, to a level below the pertinent significance criteria, it is determined to no longer have a significant effect on the environment, i.e., to be "less than significant" (Class II). If an action creates an adverse impact above the baseline condition, but such impact does not meet or exceed the pertinent significance criteria, it is determined to be adverse, but less than significant (Class III). An action that provides an improvement to an environmental issue area in comparison to the baseline information is recognized as a beneficial impact (Class IV).

Formulation of Mitigation Measures and Mitigation Monitoring Program

When significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures are formulated to eliminate or reduce the intensity of the impacts and focus on the protection of sensitive resources. The effectiveness of a mitigation measure is subsequently determined by evaluating the impact remaining after its application. Those impacts meeting or exceeding the impact significance criteria after mitigation are considered residual impacts that remain significant (Class I). Implementation of more than one mitigation measure may be needed to reduce an impact below a level of significance. The mitigation measures recommended in this document are identified in the impact sections and presented in a Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP). The MMP is provided in Section 8.0, Mitigation Monitoring Program.

1 If any mitigation measures become incorporated as part of a project's design, they are
2 no longer considered mitigation measures under CEQA. If they eliminate or reduce a
3 potentially significant impact to a level below the significance criteria, they eliminate the
4 potential for that significant impact since the "measure" is now a component of the
5 action. Such measures incorporated into the project design have the same status as
6 any "applicant proposed measures." The California State Lands Commission's (CSLC)
7 practice is to include all measures to eliminate or reduce the environmental impacts of a
8 proposed project, whether applicant proposed or recommended mitigation, in the MMP.

9 **Impacts of Alternatives**

10 Section 3.0, Alternatives and Cumulative Projects, provides a list, description and map
11 that identify alternatives to the proposed Project. Each issue area in Section 4 presents
12 the impact analysis for each alternative scenario. A summary of the collective impacts
13 of each alternative in comparison with the impacts of the proposed Project is included
14 within the Executive Summary.

15 **Cumulative Projects Impact Analysis**

16 Each issue area in Section 4.0, Environmental Analysis, presents the cumulative impact
17 scenario, the focus of which is to identify the potential impacts of the Project that might
18 not be significant when considered alone, but that might contribute to a significant
19 impact when viewed in conjunction with the other projects. This information can be
20 found at the end of each section entitled, Cumulative Projects Impact Analysis.